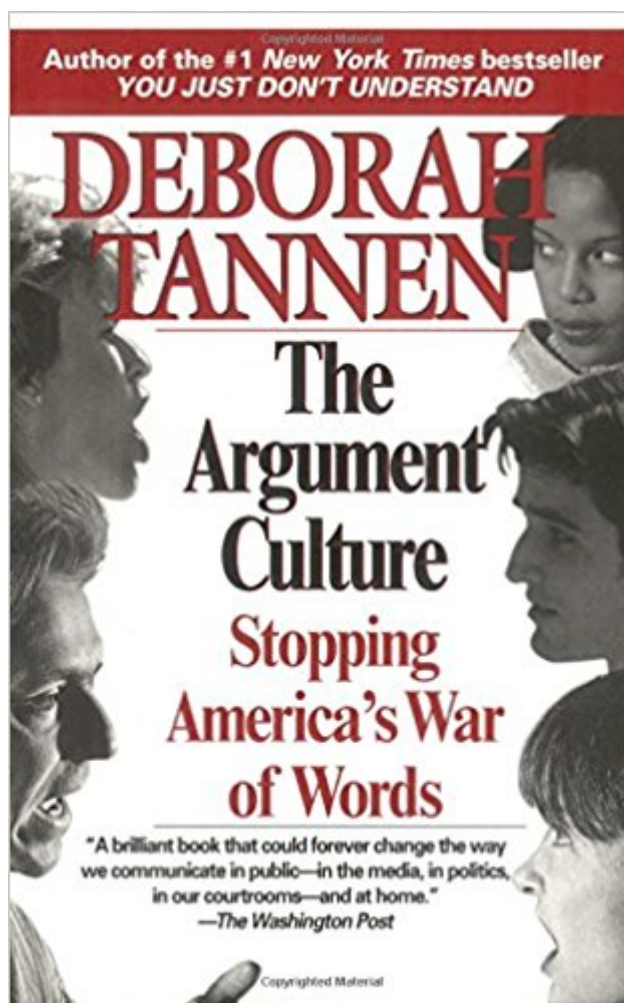


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# The Argument Culture: Stopping America's War Of Words



## Synopsis

THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS LINGUIST OFFERS A COMPLETELY ORIGINAL ANALYSIS OF THE WAY WE COMMUNICATE--AND A REVOLUTIONARY LANGUAGE TO LIVE BY!In her #1 bestseller *You Just Don't Understand*, Deborah Tannen showed why talking to someone of the opposite sex can be like talking to someone from another world. Now Tannen is back with another groundbreaking book, this time widening her lens to examine the way we communicate in public--in the media, in politics, in our courtrooms, and classrooms--once again letting us see in a new way forces that have powerfully shaped our lives. The war on drugs, the battle of the sexes, political turf combat--in the argument culture, war metaphors pervade our talk and influence our thinking. We approach anything we need to accomplish as a fight between two opposing sides. In this fascinating book, Tannen shows how deeply entrenched this cultural tendency is, the forms it takes, and how it affects us every day--sometimes in useful ways, but often causing damage. *The Argument Culture* is a remarkable book that will change forever the way you perceive--and communicate with--the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Do Americans argue too much? Deborah Tannen, author of *You Just Don't Understand* and *That's Not What I Meant!*, is an expert on miscommunication. In *The Argument Culture* she posits that misunderstanding is endemic in our culture because we tend to believe that the best way to a common goal is by thrashing out all our differences as loudly as possible along the way. Thus we are treated to a whole array of confrontational public forums, from congressional partisan politics to

media circuses — la Jerry Springer and Jenny Jones, all based on a metaphor of war. What gets lost in all the shouting, Tannen says, is thoughtful debate and real understanding. Perhaps it's time to consider other methods of communication, she suggests. In addition to outlining what she considers the worst excesses of our argument culture, Tannen revisits some of the territory covered in *You Just Don't Understand* as she discusses the different ways in which young boys and girls express disagreement or aggression. Finally, she offers a survey of other, mostly non-Western ways of dealing with conflict, including the use of intermediaries and rituals. After reading *The Argument Culture* you might never again look at the evening news in the same way. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Tannen's bestseller *You Just Don't Understand* was a guide to gender-based differences in conversational style that set the stage for follow-up titles on talk at the office and in relationships. Here she branches out, applying linguistic theory to the whole compass of American culture and public life. In law, education, multiculturalist policy making and particularly in journalism, Tannen finds that "our spirits are corroded by living in an atmosphere of unrelenting contention," and that we thus most often argue emotionally when we should instead be trying to understand and evaluate rationally different points of view. The Georgetown linguistics professor is impatient with journalists who think that a two-sided debate between extremist positions makes the best story. The attack-dog posture of the press, she argues, is responsible for public cynicism about politics. Politicians in turn find that aggressive sound bites are the ones most likely to be publicized. This results in bickering partisanship that disenchants voters. She sharply criticizes our legal system for pitting one party against the other on the theory that justice will emerge out of a survival of the fittest, comparing this type of advocacy to the trials by battle used to settle disputes in the Middle Ages. Tannen's obvious passion for helping people understand one another is well served here by her clear, direct writing. Author tour. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I think this book is timely for these days when we hear terribly inept and abusive arguments on every TV channel. It is time someone pointed out the underlying divisive nature of modern American argument. It does nothing for our culture, and in fact destroys it piece by piece. Tannen takes on all these issues one by one with fair evidence and a convincing view. I used this book to teach *Argument Writing* and my students did not enjoy some of the chapters feeling that there was a bias on her part to find fault with so much. But I think it is because the students are so young they have

little exposure to real arguments where people understand basic fairness, follow certain rules (i.e. no fallacies), are reasonable, and are willing to listen to both sides of a debate. Therefore, I feel the book did a good job of exposing them to the inequities, biases, and sheer ignorance of many of the arguments we are bombarded with today. If for nothing else, this made it a good book for young people to read. Where else can they be aware of the fallacies and breaches of logic that are blasting at them from the media on a daily basis? Thumbs up Deborah!

After reading Deborah's book I am much more aware of the aggressive combative language in our culture and the media. I feel less like a victim of it all. She helps you rise above it and see a better path. I vote for Deborah Tannen for President!

Tannen rules.

Received it in just a few short days from ordering it. Such a great read!!!!

Great Product!!

Quality book in fine condition delivered in a timely way. Thanks.

I wish this book could made required reading for everyone who listens to the media, watches TV news, votes, raises a family, or expresses an opinion. Tannen explains a large part of why our nation is in so many messes we are unable to deal with intelligently. She absolutely nails the problem. You'll never look at things the same way again.

good book i purchased for school.

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